

**REMARKS**

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended during an interview with Applicants' representative on February 17. These remarks summarize the discussions held at the interview.

In an Office Action dated October 25, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 3 through 5 and 7 through 10 as being unpatentable over a newly cited patent to Schmid, Jr. in view of Stone and a newly cited patent to Stanescu. Claims 3 through 5 and 7 through 10 together with new claims 11-17 are submitted for reconsideration. Claim 3 has been amended to further define the embodiment of the present invention claimed therein.

Claim 3 was discussed at the interview, and it was agreed that the herein submitted changes would be made and that the amended claim appeared to be allowable since the Schmid reference does not show an actuator generally midway between the opposite sides of the movable member.

Claims 11 and 14 were also discussed. The Examiner agreed to consider claim 11, but submitted that claim 14 may be anticipated by the Schmid reference. The Examiner and Applicants' representative discussed the possibility that the inventors may be able to "swear behind" the Schmid reference, since the filing date of Schmid predates the priority date of the present application by only a few months.

Applicants' representative investigated the situation with Applicants and determined that the inventors conceived their invention prior to the Schmid filing date. Enclosed herewith are affidavits of each inventor stating that one embodiment of the invention was conceived prior to the filing date of the Schmid reference. Specifically, hand-made drawings are attached to the affidavits, showing one embodiment of the present invention. The drawings were created, along with a hydraulic circuit drawing, before the filing date of the Schmid reference, and the inventors diligently reduced the invention to practice. As such, Applicant submits that Schmid is removed as prior art with respect to the embodiment of the invention shown in the drawings.

The drawings show the elements claimed in claims 11 and 14, as well as the dependent claims depending therefrom. As such, Applicant submits that Schmid is removed as prior art with respect to claims 11-17. Claims 11, 12 and 13 are directed to some of the details of the hydraulic

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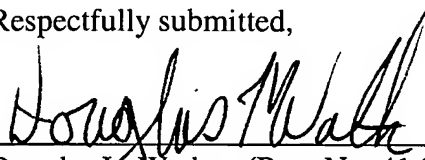
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actuator and are submitted as being allowable. Claims 14 – 17 focus on the platform assembly including a horizontal platform and a pair of handles that together move linearly and generally vertically. The remaining cited prior art does not provide a platform with handles that move together. This arrangement makes the platform more useful, since the operator may grip the handles during movement.

In light of the above, applicant respectfully submits that all claims are in condition for allowance. If further discussion or revisions are required, Applicants respectfully ask that the Examiner contact Applicants' below signed representative.

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Respectfully submitted,

  
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